



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, May 21, 2007

***GOVERNOR ARGUES FOR STRONGER BORDER SECURITY MEASURES
Met Today with Chertoff, Aguilar***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Governor Janet Napolitano met this morning in Washington, D.C., with Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and Border Patrol Chief David Aguilar to emphasize the need for stronger security measures, specifically in the fight against drug trafficking at the United States – Mexico Border.

Governor Napolitano discussed the noticeable increase in drug trafficking that is leading to heightened violence at the border. Today she again asked that more funding be allocated to the National Guard Counter Drug Program to increase new drug trafficking resources where it is needed most, such as the Arizona-Mexico border.

She also pointed out that now is not the time to reduce National Guard presence at the border. Operation Jump Start was launched a year ago. Its stated mission is to use the Guard to provide backup support, freeing up Border Patrol agents to do primary law enforcement. The Operation has been effective; the number of apprehensions of illegal immigrations has declined.

Yet there is still much to be done and the federal government still needs to achieve operational control of the international border. If the National Guard intends to continue the drawdown of troops at the border, Governor Napolitano asked that force strength be allocated based on need. She made the case that Arizona continues to demonstrate the greatest need.

The Governor also asked Secretary Chertoff to intervene in the matter involving DynCorp. The company has a contract with the federal government, and has been actively recruiting critical Border Patrol Agents to take jobs in Iraq. The salary offer to the agents is huge – more than \$130,000 with a substantial signing bonus in some cases. In a letter to President Bush last week, Governor Napolitano said that skimming senior Border Patrol at a time when Operation Jump Start is beginning to show positive results “makes no sense.”

After today’s meeting, the Governor said, “We’re finally making progress at the Mexico border; now is not the time to backslide. I intend to do everything in my power to maintain that focus. I appreciate that Secretary Chertoff and Chief Aguilar were available and willing to listen to our concerns.”

For more information on the Office of Governor Napolitano, click on www.azgovernor.gov.